



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

WESTMINSTER SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the Westminster Scrutiny Commission held on
Wednesday 9 April 2014 at 7.00pm in Committee Rooms 3 & 4,
17th floor, City Hall, Victoria Street, London, SW1 6QE

Present: Councillors Ian Adams, David Harvey, Andrew Havery and Barrie Taylor

Officers present: Charlie Parker (Chief Executive), Mark Ewbank (Scrutiny Manager) and Mick Steward (Head of Committee and Governance Services)

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTES

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013 be agreed.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman varied the order of business to take Item 6 as the next item in view of the limited time available to Mr Betts.

4. HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT – COUNCILLORS ON THE FRONT LINE (See Report Item 6)

4.1 Mr Clive Betts, MP, addressed the meeting. He explained the actions which had been taken by, for example, LGA in response. He advised that most of the Select Committee had previously been Councillors and so had first hand experience of the issue facing local Councillors. In future he advised that the Committee may look at the role of Scrutiny. The Committee had seen good

examples of Member training and development but was an area which required improvement.

- 4.2 Mr Betts confirmed that the LGA had welcomed the report and encouraged Councillors to act on the recommendations. He confirmed that his Committee would look again in two years to see if any changes had arisen.
- 4.3 Mr Betts thanked the Commission for asking him and invited them to submit evidence to the Select Committee particularly on the role of Scrutiny.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Work Programme for 2014/15 included relevant aspects of the Select Committee's report.
- (ii) That the Commissions thanks be recorded to Mr Betts for attending.

5. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- 5.1 Mr Parker introduced his paper. He explained what action he had undertaken during his first 100 days. He had taken time to understand the organisation and meeting staff, stakeholders and community representatives. He explained how he had already met all Councillors in different forums. He explained that he had taken time to understand the organisation by meeting staff, stakeholders and community representatives. He had met Members including all Cabinet Members, Majority and Minority Party groups. He had an impression of an organisation with a high challenging downsizing. The Chief Executive responded to questions and advised that the Tri-borough programme was the best example of real integration of services in the sector. He also updated the Commission regarding the Corporate Services and the Managed Services programme. He added that the staff involved in Tri-borough deserved thanks for achieving so much in the first phase of the Tri-borough partnership.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive referred to aspects of silo working as an area of weakness. Also future benchmarking should be against top-performing companies rather than just other local authorities. He wanted to focus on a more sustainable model for a future local authority and stressed the need to do things differently, particularly to meet the fiscal challenge. He explained how he was particularly focusing on the delivery of Better City, Better Lives as the strategic vision for the organisation.
- 5.3 Mr Parker explained that over the last several months, the City Council and the Central London Forward (CLF) grouping of boroughs have been working closely with London Councils and the Greater London Authority to contribute to the London Growth Deal submission to Government and consider what a "Deal" might look like for central London as the UK's economic powerhouse. The final "Deal" submission was submitted on Monday 31 March.
- 5.4 The Commission thanked the Chief Executive for his comprehensive update and asked that next time he reports on the Ward visit programme including further how he would be engaging with Backbench Members.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

6.1 The Commission asked that Member Development be included in the Work Programme for 2014/15, plus provision for the Annual Report to be reviewed as part of the Work Programme.

6.2 The draft Work Programme to be circulated to the Chairman and other members of the Commission for comment and included in the agenda for the next meeting.

7. IMPROVING POLICY AND SCRUTINY AND TASK GROUP AND SINGLE MEMBER STUDY PROTOCOLS

7.1 The Commission considered these items together. The steps set out in the papers were being used by Policy and Scrutiny Committee's in their own way. The reports were noted.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES (see Report of the Head of Committee and Governance Services)

8.1 The report was **NOTED**.

9. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____